AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 1, as follows:

Figure 1 illustrates the data format for a SONET STS-1 frame 100 having 9 rows by 90 columns of bytes (otherwise referred to as "octets"). The first three columns 102 are allocated for transport overhead (TOH) information which includes section overhead (SOH) and line overhead (LOH) data. As is known in the art, SOH data deals with the transport of an STS frame across the physical medium and controls functions such as framing the SONET data stream, scrambling and error monitoring. The LOH data deals with the reliable transport of the payload between line terminating equipment. The remaining 87 columns of the STS-1 frame consist of 783 octets (9 rows x 87 columns) that are allocated for "user" data, otherwise referred to as the "payload." The structure of the payload is defined by a synchronous payload envelope (SPE) 200 which contains 783 octets of data and is transmitted at 8,000 times per second. The first column ~~210~~ 112 of SPE ~~200~~ 110 contains additional overhead information, commonly referred to as path overhead (POH) data, as well as the actual user data. The POH data ~~210~~ 112 is stored in one "column" or nine bytes of the SPE. The first POH byte indicates the first byte of the SPE. The POH data is used to monitor and manage the transport of network services such as DS1 or DS3, for example, between path terminating equipment (PTE).